



## Terms of Reference

### *“Advancing Effective Management of the Marine Protected Area System in The Bahamas—a baseline assessment of co-management arrangements with recommendations for a national co-management framework”*

#### I. Background

Government leaders in 10 Caribbean countries and territories have challenged one another to meet the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI), a regional agenda to triple the coverage of protected marine and coastal habitat in the Caribbean by protecting an additional 21 million acres of coral reefs, mangroves and other important habitats by 2020. But enduring marine protection requires more than simply setting aside acreage. Effective implementation and management of protected areas is also critical – otherwise, parks will exist on paper only. Therefore, the CCI also challenges Caribbean governments to effectively manage at least 50 percent of existing protected areas by executing management plans and facilitating necessary staff, infrastructure, policies and regulations to create functioning and effective marine parks that achieve their intended objectives

Declared in 1958, The Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park is the oldest marine protected area in The Bahamas. Since the 1950s The Bahamas has been steadily expanding its protected area system. More recently, the Government of The Bahamas announced the designation of 5 National Parks on the island of San Salvador on April 23, 2015, and on August 31, 2015, the Government announced 15 new MPAs and the expansion of three existing MPAs throughout the Bahamian archipelago. These declarations have increased The Bahamas’ existing MPA network by more than 11 million acres. The Bahamas currently protects ten percent (10%) of its coastal and marine territory.

Notwithstanding declarations, only a well-managed network of MPAs will guarantee long-lasting, tangible conservation results in The Bahamas. With 51 protected areas already declared in The Bahamas, only four have formalized management plans that outline goals, conservation actions and measures toward effective management. There are at least a dozen more protected areas that have draft management plans.

Over the past decade, national partners have not only focused on developing site specific management plans for Protected Areas, but have also worked together on a number of initiatives, which have been geared towards improving the management structure of the national system of protected areas. The following have been completed to date in an effort to advance the Bahamas National Protected Area System; Ecological Gap Analysis, Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management (RAPPAM), Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) exercise, Capacity Action Plan and Sustainable Finance Plan . National partners have also collaborated to finalize the Master Plan for The

Bahamas National Protected Area System which incorporates an Action Plan for implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) over a ten-year period (2010 – 2020).

## II. Purpose of Consultancy

**Long term goal:** To develop and implement a co-management framework that is suited to the varying socio-economic, cultural and ecological considerations and contexts found throughout the Bahamas Protected Area System.

**Current Need:** The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is seeking to contract a consultant to complete a review and assessment of the status of MPA management in The Bahamas to determine progress on the ten year action plan included in the Master Plan for The Bahamas National Protected Area System. The Consultant will also identify the key stakeholders and players involved (government, non-government and private sector), while providing specific recommendations for the development and implementation of a sustainable co-management framework for protected area in The Bahamas, including financial considerations. In this regard, the consultant will need to review the literature pertaining to protected areas in The Bahamas, interview important leaders, managers and relevant participants within the network, and visit selected protected area sites to gain first-hand knowledge of the current management practices within the field.

## III. Scope of Work

The scope of work will include but is not strictly limited to the following:

1. Compile, review and summarize the findings and recommendations from historical MPA documents, reports, action plans etc. completed within the past 10 years in the Bahamas including the Master Plan for The Bahamas National Protected Area System to determine progress;
2. Conduct an assessment of the feasibility and benefits of a co-management approach for the management of marine protected areas in The Bahamas through literature review, interviews and site visits (3-4 sites) to a selected number of MPAs throughout The Bahamas;
3. Review and analyze relevant legal instruments and jurisdiction of management agencies to determine overlaps and/or how to utilize the supporting legal framework and laws effectively to support a co-management framework;
4. Identify challenges/barriers to advancing co-management based on the current legal framework, and provide recommendations where appropriate to amend the legislation to acknowledge, facilitate and support a co-management regime;
5. Complete a stakeholder analysis to gather input on the most appropriate co-management framework. Key stakeholders should include the relevant agencies and personnel directly involved in the implementation and management of protected areas. The stakeholder analysis should also assess the current capacity for specific entities to be engaged in co-management and capacity-building needs to facilitate co-management;
6. Suggest different types of co-management arrangements and provide recommendations (based on findings from the Stakeholder Analysis) on the most appropriate/applicable approaches to

implement and if feasible, implement the suggested co-management arrangement through a pilot study at one or more sites;

7. Develop and recommend criteria for selecting sites to implement an applicable co-management arrangement; and
8. Design a strategy for the development and implementation of pilot co-management projects across the Protected Area Network. Strategy should be based on recommended criteria (see bullet above) as well as strong partnerships and conservation success [between a protected area management agency (e.g. The Bahamas National Trust) and another organization].

#### IV. Specific Outputs

The outputs from this consultancy will include:

1. Baseline assessment report that includes all literature reviewed and sources of information following a standard outline as agreed with the contractor;
2. The results of meetings, interviews and stakeholder workshop(s) written as a short stand-alone report to document the discussions and agreements emanating from the meetings, interviews and workshop(s);
3. Stakeholder analysis and legislative review report that highlights the challenges, explores recommendations and proposes amendments (where appropriate) to facilitate and accommodate co-management arrangement under Bahamian Law;
4. A final report and co-management strategy document that summarizes the recommendations for and key elements to be included in a co-management framework for The Bahamas based on the findings and baseline assessment; and
5. At least one seminar presentation on the findings of the consultancy to a pertinent audience in the Bahamas that includes key stakeholders and TNC staff among others.

#### V. Contractor's Qualifications

The selected consultant should have previous experience in evaluating management effectiveness of protected areas and/or in developing governance frameworks for natural resource management in the Caribbean or similar areas. Several important qualifications include:

- Possess at least a Master's level degree in a relevant field;
- At least 5 years' experience in community-based co-management in conjunction with government agencies for natural resource management;
- Ability to be self-directed, multi-task, organized and meet deadlines;
- Experience interviewing a variety of persons in a manner that is sensitive to their context and limitations;
- Ability to compile large amounts of information succinctly into a coherent report for conservation practitioners and government officials; and
- Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.

## VII. Timeline

The consultancy is expected to run for 6 months from start to finish; the exact dates will be determined after a consultant has been selected and a finalized work plan has been developed and agreed upon.

## VIII Submission of Proposals

Interested bidders should submit proposals no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2016 to [frederick.arnett@tnc.org](mailto:frederick.arnett@tnc.org). All submissions should include at a minimum the following details:

- Relevant experience of the consultant/firm;
- Key personnel within the firm that are expected to work on this project along with their relevant experience, if applicable;
- Detailed synopsis of past experience with particular emphasis on assessing and developing co-management frameworks;
- Proposed methodology and work plan; and
- Detailed budget that includes cost for personnel, workshop/trainings, travel, etc. (as appropriate).

## IX Contact

Submissions should be sent to the following address below:

Frederick Arnett II  
Conservation Practitioner  
Northern Caribbean Program  
The Nature Conservancy  
**Email:** [frederick.arnett@tnc.org](mailto:frederick.arnett@tnc.org)

Once selected, the consultant will report to Frederick Arnett and work as part of the TNC team based in the Bahamas.